

BLACK PANTHER

POWER PART 2

Since the dawn of time, the proud African warrior nation of Wakanda has evolved as a high-tech, resource-rich, ecologically sound paradise unmatched anywhere else in the world. Their ruler is the Black Panther, Wakanda's religious, political, and military leader and the embodiment of the ideals of the nation.



T'Challa, former ruler of Wakanda and Black Panther, was critically wounded in an assassination attempt. Only by his sister Shuri's determination and will to step up and claim the mantle of Black Panther was the country spared from the chaos that followed.

Acting now as Black Panther and Princess-Regent of Wakanda, Shuri has made it her mission to clear up the mysterious circumstances surrounding the attempt on her brother's life. During a diplomatic visit to the United States, she is ambushed by cybernetically augmented soldiers, utilizing technology from around the world, including Wakandan military weapons. Seeking a connection, Shuri sets out to investigate.

Meanwhile in Wakanda, T'Challa aims to repair his broken body and spirit to seek revenge on the man who came for his life. The man whose identity T'Challa has disclosed to no one: Dr. Doom.

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THIS IS THE WEAPON THE HIT TEAM USED. MOST OF IT IS STARK TECHNOLOGY. A PULSE LASER CANNON WITH A MINIATURE REPULSER CORE TO SUPERHEAT THE MIX OF CHLORINE GAS AND HYDROGEN PEROXIDE.

NICE TECHNOLOGY, BUT **NOT** BRAND NEW. AT LEAST HALF OF THE STARK FACILITIES UPGRADED TO A SMALLER REPULSER UNIT, EVEN BEFORE THE WHOLE SKRULL DEBACLE.



THE CONTROL CIRCUIT IS THE MOST TROUBLING, PARTLY BECAUSE IT IS STATE-OF-THE-ART, AND PARTLY BECAUSE IT'S OUR OWN.

WAKANDAN.
NO DOUBT ABOUT IT.



IN THE SAME LEAGUE.



SO IT'S **WHAT?** STARK'S BARGAIN-COUNTER STUFF?

UNKNOWN.

IT'S ODD, THOUGH, AND IT DOESN'T EXACTLY POINT US TO STARK INDUSTRIES. MORE LIKE IT'S SOMETHING LOOTED FROM THEM DURING THE RECENT TROUBLES.



THAT'S AIR FORCE-ISSUE.

YES, RETASKED TO GUIDE LASER-PULSE FIRE. WHOEVER MODIFIED IT IS A GENIUS.

SMARTER THAN YOU?



THAT'S WHAT TROUBLES ME. THERE ARE MAYBE--**MAYBE**--A HANDFUL OF WEAPONS DESIGNERS IN THE WORLD WHO COULD HAVE RETASKED THAT CHIP TO WORK WITH REPULSERS. MOST OF THEM ARE WAKANDAN.

BUT THAT'S WHERE WE MAY HAVE CAUGHT OUR FIRST BREAK.

ZAKAR...?



WE RAN DEEP BACKGROUND CHECKS ON ANYONE WHO EVER CAME WITHIN SNIFFING DISTANCE OF THE TOP SECRET STUFF-- TECHNOLOGY, WEAPONS SYSTEMS, SECURITY PROTOCOLS. MY PEOPLE HAVE COMPILED A LIST OF POSSIBLES AND WE'RE RUNNING THEM DOWN.

"POSSIBLES"? ARE YOU STARTING A WITCH HUNT, ZAKAR?



I'M LOOKING FOR A TRAITOR. OR TRAITORS.

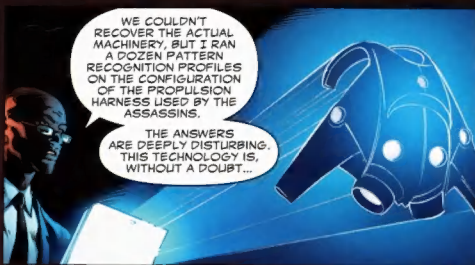
WE CAN'T BE SO NAIVE AS TO BELIEVE THAT EVERYONE IN THE COUNTRY IS A LOYAL SUBJECT OF THE CROWN. THE FACT THAT **ANY** OF OUR TECHNOLOGY GOT INTO THE HANDS OF PEOPLE WHO'D ACTUALLY ATTEMPT TO KILL THE PRINCESS REGENT PROVES WE MUST PRACTICE EXTREME VIGILANCE IN OUR SEARCH.



JUST TREAD CAREFULLY, ZAKAR.

NOW, IF THAT'S THE GOOD NEWS, I JUST CAN'T WAIT UNTIL I HEAR THE **BAD** NEWS.

IT'S MORE THAN JUST BAD, MAJESTY.



WE COULDN'T RECOVER THE ACTUAL MACHINERY, BUT I RAN A DOZEN PATTERN RECOGNITION PROFILES ON THE CONFIGURATION OF THE PROPULSION HARNESS USED BY THE ASSASSINS.

THE ANSWERS ARE DEEPLY DISTURBING. THIS TECHNOLOGY IS, WITHOUT A DOUBT...

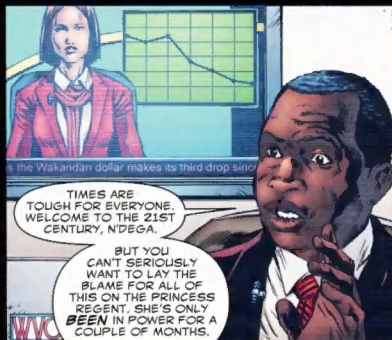


ATLANTEAN.



--CAN'T IGNORE THE GROWING UNREST THAT'S SPREADING ACROSS WAKANDA. THE ECONOMY IS FALTERING BECAUSE MANY OF OUR CLIENT COUNTRIES CAN'T AFFORD TO BUY OUR EXPORTED TECHNOLOGIES. SIX OF OUR FOURTEEN MAJOR BANKS HAVE FOLDED.

SIMPLY PUT, WAKANDA IS NO LONGER IMMUNE TO THE PROBLEMS THAT ARE HITTING EVERY COUNTRY.



...the Wakandan dollar makes its third drop since...

TIMES ARE TOUGH FOR EVERYONE. WELCOME TO THE 21ST CENTURY, N'DEGA.

BUT YOU CAN'T SERIOUSLY WANT TO LAY THE BLAME FOR ALL OF THIS ON THE PRINCESS REGENT. SHE'S ONLY BEEN IN POWER FOR A COUPLE OF MONTHS.



NO KING
NO COUNTRY

WAKANDA FOR
WAKANDANS

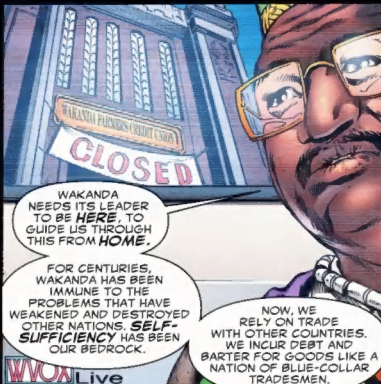
--AND IN THOSE MONTHS THINGS HAVE STARTED FALLING APART. EVEN YOU HAVE TO ADMIT THAT, MTOKA.

IT DOESN'T HELP MATTERS THAT OUR NEW RULER SPENDS MORE TIME ABROAD THAN SHE DOES IN HER OWN COUNTRY.



THE ECONOMIC TSUNAMI HAS DAMAGED CONFIDENCE IN GLOBAL SUPER-POWERS LIKE WAKANDA. PRINCESS REGENT SHURI IS WORKING TO REPAIR DAMAGED RELATIONS AND BUILD NEW BRIDGES--

HOW? BY LEAVING HER PEOPLE TO FEND FOR THEMSELVES?



PARLAMENT BUILDINGS CREDIT UNION
CLOSED

WAKANDA NEEDS ITS LEADER TO BE HERE, TO GUIDE US THROUGH THIS FROM HOME.

FOR CENTURIES, WAKANDA HAS BEEN IMMUNE TO THE PROBLEMS THAT HAVE WEAKENED AND DESTROYED OTHER NATIONS. SELF-SUFFICIENCY HAS BEEN OUR BEDROCK.

NOW, WE RELY ON TRADE WITH OTHER COUNTRIES. WE INCUR DEBT AND BARTER FOR GOODS LIKE A NATION OF BLUE-COLLAR TRADESMEN.



THAT'S NOT WHO WE ARE. AND A PATH AS PEDESTRIAN AS THAT WILL LEAD TO ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL COLLAPSE...

...AND ANARCHY.



YOUR MAJESTY--
YOU MUST CONVINCE
HIM TO TAKE IT EASY.
THAT HE HAS SURVIVED
AT ALL IS A MIRACLE.

MORE
THAN A
MIRACLE...

YOU DON'T
SERIOUSLY EXPECT
T'CHALLA TO "TAKE
IT EASY"?



EXPECT? NO.
HE'S LIKE HIS FATHER
IN THAT REGARD. BUT
I PRAY THAT HE
DOES.

HE **MUST**.
HE NO LONGER HAS
THE PANTHER SPIRIT.
HE'S LOST THE MENTAL
AND PHYSICAL
ADVANTAGES THAT MADE
HIM THE BLACK PANTHER.
HE'S AN ORDINARY
MAN WITH...



ORDINARY?

DOCTOR,
HOW YOU HAVE
SERVED THIS
FAMILY FOR SO
LONG AND NOT
UNDERSTOOD.

T'CHALLA
DOES NOT
COME FROM
A LINE OF
"ORDINARY
MEN."



FORGIVE ME
FOR MISSPEAKING,
BUT T'CHALLA ISN'T THE
YOUNG A MAN HE ONCE
WAS--AND THIS ORDEAL HAS
AGED HIM. LESS SO, PERHAPS,
THAN IT WOULD HAVE
IF HE **WERE** ORDINARY...
BUT THE DAMAGE
GOES VERY DEEP.



HOW
DEEP?



QUITE
SIMPLY: IF
T'CHALLA KEEPS
THIS UP...

...HE'S
GOING TO **KILL**
HIMSELF.

ATLANTEAN?

IT DOESN'T MAKE SENSE. PRINCE NAMOR AND HIS PEOPLE HAVE ALWAYS BEEN FRIENDS TO MY BROTHER...AND OUR PEOPLE.

THIS IS THE SAME UNIT USED DURING THE LAST TWO ASSAULTS ATLANTIS MADE ON THE U.S. MAINLAND. THE DESIGN IS FOUND **NOWHERE** ELSE ON EARTH, AND CERTAINLY NO LAND-BASED GROUP--NOT EVEN A.I.M. OR HYDRA--HAS PIRATED THIS TECHNOLOGY.

AT LEAST AS FAR AS WE KNOW.

THAT'S PRETTY DAMN INTERESTING, N'II, BUT NONE OF THOSE KILLERS WHO AMBUSHED US HAD BLUE SKIN. WHITE, YES...BLACK, YES...BLUE...NOPE.

HE'S RIGHT. WE NEED A DIRECTION, N'II. WE NEED SOMEONE TO HUNT.

ACTUALLY, **THERE** WE HAVE A PRETTY SOLID LEAD.

THIS IS HELLERMAN EXPORTS--**HEX** FOR SHORT--BASED IN NEWARK, NEW JERSEY.

MY SOURCES HAVE BEEN LEADING ME THERE FOR A COUPLE OF DAYS NOW AND I THINK IT'S THE BEST PLACE TO START. IT'S TIED TO A MAN WHO HAS MADE SOMETHING OF A REPUTATION BROKERING TECHNOLOGIES TO POLITICALLY EXTREME GROUPS.

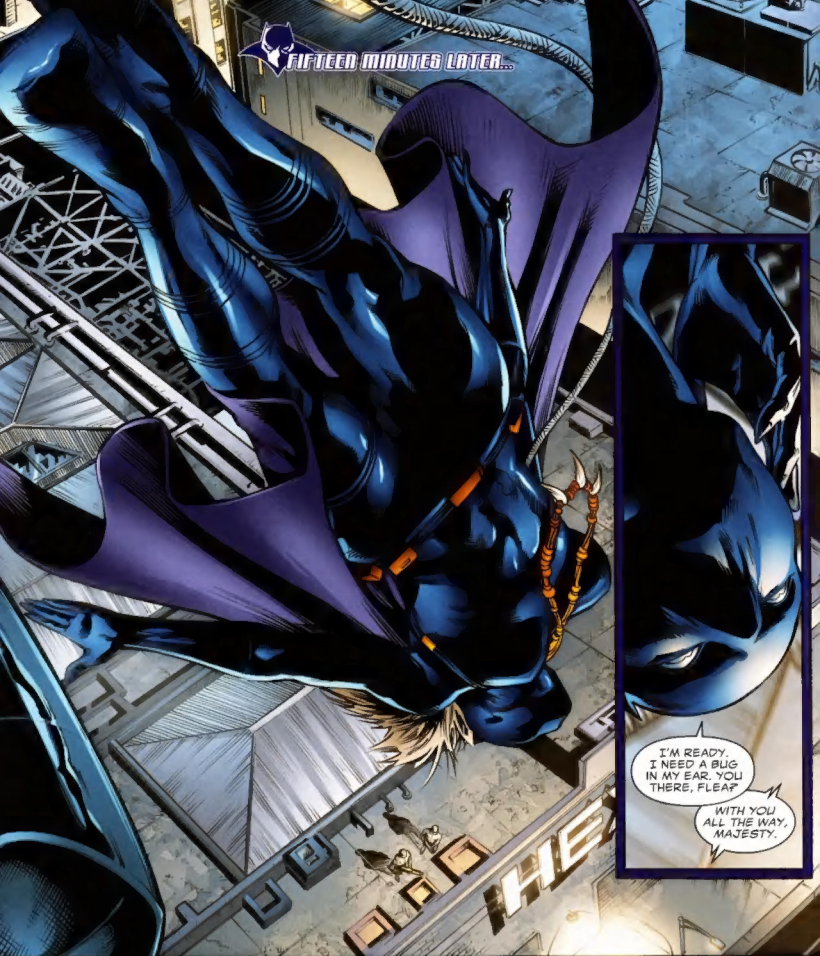
IT'S NOT CERTAIN, BUT--

IT'S A START.





FIFTEEN MINUTES LATER...



I'M READY.
I NEED A BUG
IN MY EAR. YOU
THERE, FLEA?

WITH YOU
ALL THE WAY,
MAJESTY.



I'M LOCKED
INTO A GEOSTATIONARY
ORBIT ABOVE BEAUTIFUL
DOWNTOWN NEWARK. I'M WIRED
IN AND READY TO DOWNLOAD
EVERYTHING FROM NORAD LAUNCH
CODES TO THE JAY-Z CD
THEY'RE RELEASING
NEXT MONTH.

I'M THE EYE
IN THE SKY AND
THE FLEA IN YOUR
EAR, MAJESTY.



TELL N'LIK
THE SPIDER BITES
WORK PERFECTLY.
I'LL BE GONE LONG
BEFORE THEY COME
AROUND.

NOT YET.
DON'T WANT TO
ALARM ANYONE
TOO SOON.

WANT ME TO JAM THE
COMMUNICATIONS?

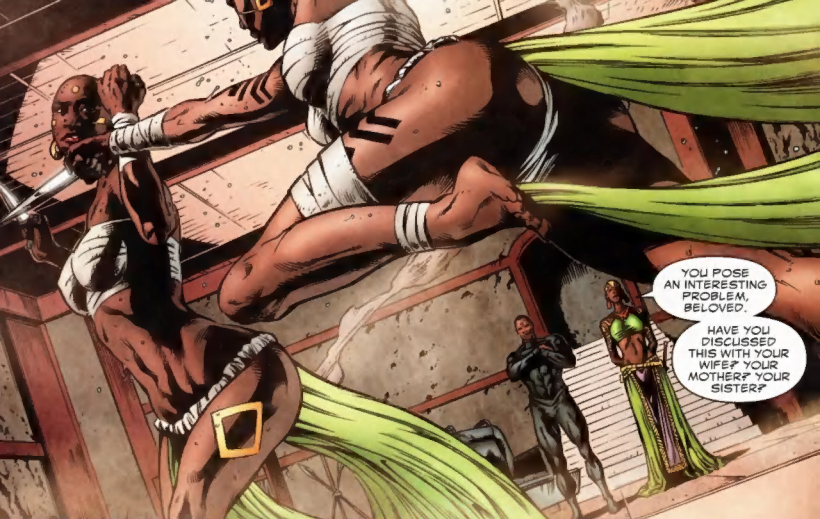


DOOR HAS A
GEOMETRY SCANNER
AND RETINAL SCAN
BACKUP. I NEED A
BYPASS CO--



ZZZZT
-CLICK!

NEVER
MIND.



YOU POSE AN INTERESTING PROBLEM, BELOVED.

HAVE YOU DISCUSSED THIS WITH YOUR WIFE? YOUR MOTHER? YOUR SISTER?



NO. AS OF THIS MOMENT ONLY THREE PEOPLE ON EARTH KNOW. YOU... ME...

...AND DOOM.



I WON'T ASK, BELOVED. YOUR REASONS ARE YOUR OWN.

CAN YOU HELP?



TO CREATE A NEW FIGHTING SUB-STYLE THAT WILL COUNTER ROBOTS? YES.

TO IMPROVE THE EFFICIENCY OF EACH DORA MILAJE SO THEY CAN MORE EFFECTIVELY DODGE FORCE BOLTS? YES.



BUT WE ARE FLESH AND BLOOD, BELOVED. IF YOU WANT TO OPPOSE **MAGIC**, THEN YOU NEED TO FIND YOUR ANSWERS ELSEWHERE.

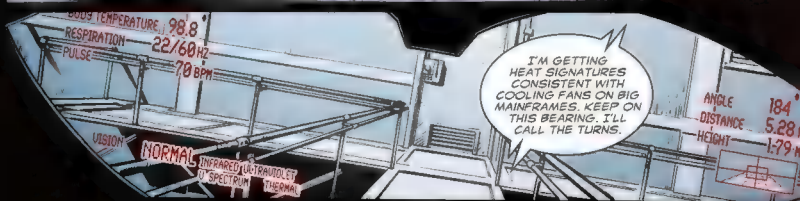


SCHEMATICS?

DOWNLOADING
NOW.

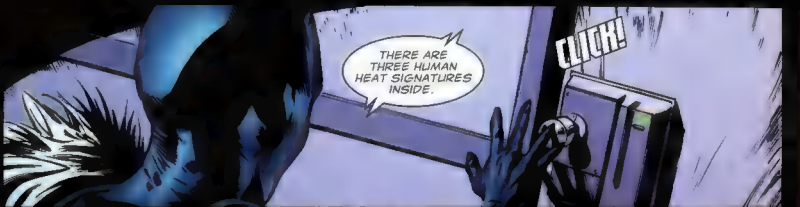
YOU A
MIND READER,
FLEA?

IT'S IN MY
JOB DESCRIPTION,
MAJESTY.



I'M GETTING
HEAT SIGNATURES
CONSISTENT WITH
COOLING FANS ON BIG
MAINFRAMES. KEEP ON
THIS BEARING. I'LL
CALL THE TURNS.

ANGLE 184
DISTANCE 5.28 M
HEIGHT 1.79 M



THERE ARE
THREE HUMAN
HEAT SIGNATURES
INSIDE.

CLUCK!



FIVE SECONDS LATER...

GOT IT.

TELL ME
WHAT I'M
LOOKING
FOR.



THERE'S TOO
MUCH INTERFERENCE
FOR A CLEAN DATA
TRANSFER, MAJESTY.
YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE
TO DOWNLOAD IT TO
THE PORTABLE BRAIN
AND BRING IT OUT
YOURSELF.

I'M PLUGGED
INTO THEIR HARD
DRIVE, BEGINNING
UPLOAD.



SAVING
NOW.

I DON'T
THINK
SO.



PRINCESS-
REGENT SHURI.

MM-MM

JUICY.

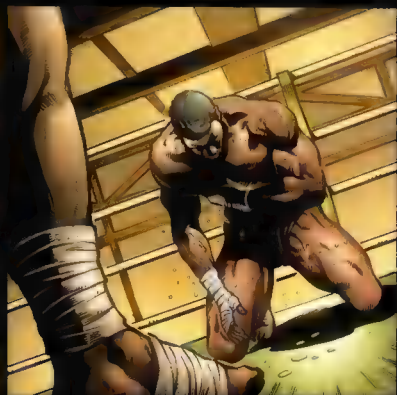


AND YOU
ARE...?

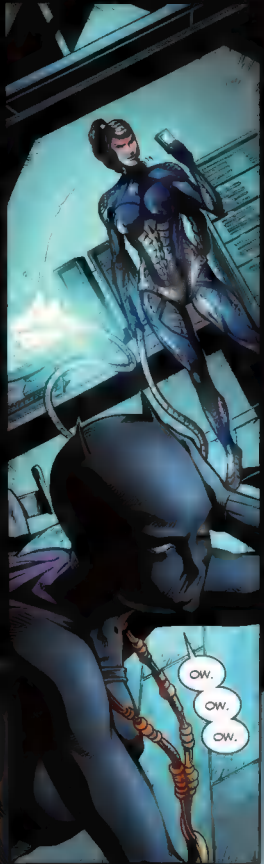
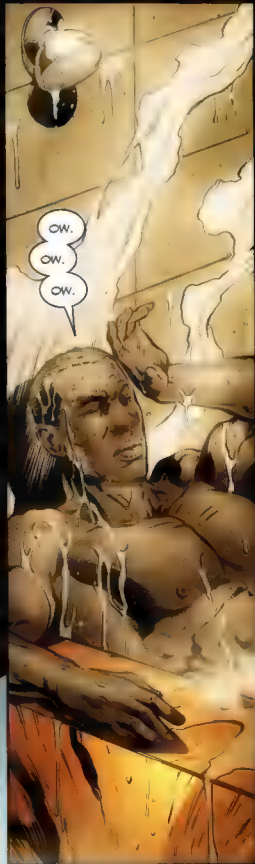


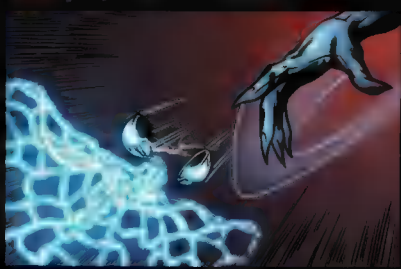
I'M
OHYAKU.
BABYCAKES...
AND YOU...

WELL,
KITTEL...
YOU'RE JUST
DEAD.

















SHE'S GIVING OHYAKU A RUN FOR HER MONEY.

WHAT DID YOU EXPECT?



I LIKE HER TOYS.

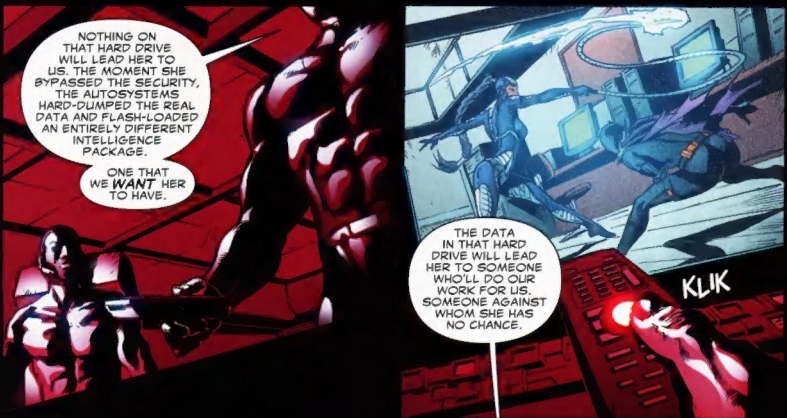
HAS TO BE N'IX. HE'S DEVISOR ENOUGH TO HAVE COOKED THEM UP.



HOW COOKED ARE WE IF SHE GETS AWAY WITH THAT HARD DRIVE?

IT DOESN'T MATTER.

I--



NOTHING ON THAT HARD DRIVE WILL LEAD HER TO US. THE MOMENT SHE BYPASSED THE SECURITY, THE AUTOSYSTEMS HARD-DUMPED THE REAL DATA AND FLASH-LOADED AN ENTIRELY DIFFERENT INTELLIGENCE PACKAGE.

ONE THAT WE WANT HER TO HAVE.

THE DATA IN THAT HARD DRIVE WILL LEAD HER TO SOMEONE WHO'LL DO OUR WORK FOR US. SOMEONE AGAINST WHOM SHE HAS NO CHANCE.

KLIK

NEXT MONTH IN BLACK PANTHER #9



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